

SCRIPTURES FOR THE BLIND

# BIBLE SOCIETY RECORD

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IN COMMEMORATION OF

The Fortieth Anniversary of the WILLIAM INGRAHAM HAVEN MEMORIAL  
AGENCY among the Colored People of the United States



“THE FIELD IS THE WORLD”

1816 — One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Year of the American Bible Society — 1941

TRANSLATION



# Finding and Meeting the Bible Needs of Atlanta

By D. H. STANTON

**D**URING the closing days of the General Conference of the Methodist Church in Atlantic City last spring, I found time to spend the major part of an afternoon in the exhibition booth of the American Bible Society.

One particular afternoon, as I was to spend considerable time there, I had on my finger tips the answers to questions I expected those interested to ask, and had primed myself to answer whatever questions General Secretary North might ask me; for, by special appointment, I was to meet him there. He was among the first to arrive after I had reached the booth; but, instead of asking questions, he began immediately to check the material which he said he was leaving in my care, as he was departing for New York that night. It was not long, however, before we were lost in a conversation about the work of the Society at home and abroad. He talked of "its vast field; the thrilling and revealing nature of it; the heart-hurting hunger of the people in every land for the Word, which was made the more so now because of present world conditions." He spoke of many other things; never seeming to be trying to make his conversation interesting, but all the while so full of real interest, that I forgot the throng which, all the while, was passing by.

While I was in that mood, he turned to me, and, looking straight into my eyes, said, "As I think of this matter of distribution, the seeming never-endingness of it, I have a desire to see some spot—city, town or community—in some District, where every house has been canvassed, and where a record of the Bible needs has been made and met, if possible, so I can believe that at that place the work has been finished for the moment."

In a few moments he added, "I should like to have you attempt such a task in Atlanta. Suppose you think it through, and, as soon as your budget will permit, try it out." Some other things were said about how such a job could be done, and what, if successfully carried out, it would mean to the work everywhere. Then, with that broad smile for which



*"They will never be the same after this experience"*

he has a patent, and a confidence-inspiring handshake, he bade me good-bye and was off for New York.

Within a few days I was in Atlanta, trying to "think it through," in the hope that I might make this dream a reality. An all-too-limited budget stood in the way of getting the competent and experienced person who, for the moment, seemed necessary for

*(Turn to page 29.)*



# BIBLE SOCIETY RECORD

*A Journal Dedicated to the Wider Distribution of the Holy Scriptures*

Volume 86

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Number 2

## In Celebration of Forty Years

*A brief sketch of the origin, development, accomplishments, and hopes of the Society's Agency for work among the colored people established in 1901*

By ERIC M. NORTH

**F**ORTY years ago there were some serious issues under discussion in the Bible House on Astor Place. The system of auxiliary societies, which had been a powerful factor in the effectiveness of the Society from its founding in 1816, was developing weaknesses. How should they be dealt with? To answer the question, a conference of these societies met in October 1900. One resolution, only incidental to the main discussions, set moving plans which ultimately became the solution of the principal issues. This was a recommendation that "special communities and exceptional populations" should be supplied with Scriptures by the national Society wherever the auxiliary societies were lacking or inadequate. Under this resolution, the Board of Managers, in the following year, established the "Agency among the Colored People of the United States." This Agency was the forerunner of the Agency (now District) system which has so largely stepped into the place left by the gradual but general dissolution of the auxiliary societies.

In this new step, one can well imagine the active part played by the two new General Secretaries, Dr. William Ingraham Haven and Dr. John Fox, both appointed in 1898; especially the interest of Dr. Haven. His father, Bishop Gilbert Haven, for a time a chaplain in the Union Army, had courageously befriended the Negro people in the South in the reconstruction era when it was perilous to do so. His brother-in-law, Dr. Wilbur P. Thirkield, had been president of Gammon Seminary in Atlanta, a school for Negro ministers. Upon Dr. Haven's graduation from college, he himself had taught for a year in Claflin University, a Negro col-

lege in South Carolina. Undoubtedly, out of these associations arose the effective guidance of Dr. Haven in the formation of the Agency among the Colored People. Thereby also arose the selection of the first Secretary of the Agency, Dr. John P. Wragg, suggested for the position by Dr. Thirkield and a graduate both of Claflin University and Gammon Seminary.

*Dr. and Mrs. John P. Wragg*

The event, therefore, that is here celebrated is the founding of that Agency forty years ago. This span of years was nearly covered by Dr. Wragg himself in his active service from 1901 to 1929 and as Secretary emeritus until his death in 1936. But its years have been fully covered by the life of his beloved and constant helper, his wife, Mrs. Jessie E. Wragg, who passed away on December 28, 1940, to her last conscious moment devoted to the welfare of the Society. These first four decades are, therefore, largely the achievement of Dr. and Mrs. Wragg, the fruit of whose devotion to the Agency will last through the generations. When Dr. Wragg came to retire in 1929, he asked the privilege of renaming the Agency the William Ingraham Haven Memorial Agency among the Colored People of the United States, and established for its support a fund built up with single-minded devotion out of the lifelong savings of himself and Mrs. Wragg. At her death the fund had reached to over \$66,000. In their action there was never the slightest expression of pride of achievement, of conscious self-sacrifice, of self-approbation, only a never-ending loyalty and gratitude. With this as the seed sown in the first forty years of the Agency,



surely the harvest must be of "the finest of the wheat" in the years to come.

### *Before the forty years*

The establishment of the Agency did not by any means represent the beginning of the distribution of the Scriptures among the colored people by the Society. For many years local auxiliaries had made such distribution to Negroes who could read (the census of 1870 reported only 18.6 percent of the Negro population over ten years of age as literate). Of course, one should not think of even the illiterate Negro population as ignorant of the gospel; for truly through the great melodic "spirituals" the gospel was interpreted, and, in the words of James Weldon Johnson's noble poem, these "black and unknown bards" "sang a race from wood and stone to Christ." But fuller knowledge awaited fuller capacities. As opportunities for effective distribution increased, the Society took advantage of them: in 1864 and 1865 more than 70,000 volumes were thus distributed; and thereafter, in systematic ways, often through the rising educational institutions, thousands of new readers received the Bible as their first and most eagerly desired book. The publicity attending these efforts reached as far as Turkey, whence \$400 were received as gifts of many nationalities to supply the Scriptures to the "freed people!"

Ambassador Bryce once said that the American Negro, in the first thirty years of his liberation, made a greater advance than was ever made by the Anglo-Saxon race in a similar time. Indeed, by 1900 the percentage of literacy had risen to 55.5 percent (in 1930, 83.7 percent), and the share of the Negro people in their own advancement had become a far greater factor than the aid brought by agencies fostered by others. Thus the founding of the Society's Agency among the Colored People in 1901 was not only in recognition of the need of additional efforts to secure the distribution of the Scriptures among the Negro population, which had nearly doubled in thirty years. It was something more. To quote from the *Record* of June 1901, "In the school and church life of this people there are coming for-

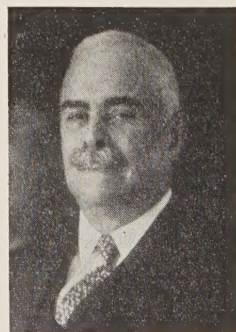
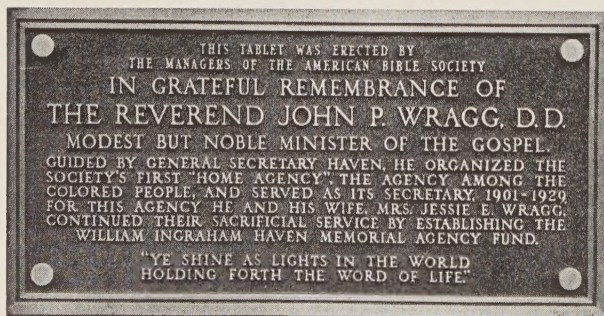
ward many who have the gift of leadership, and who can perhaps better reach their own people than any other missionary workers." It was also recognized that this work would have a definite relationship to the fast-rising Negro churches.

### *How the work developed*

Dr. and Mrs. Wragg, beginning their task with the simplest possible measures and the strictest sense of trusteeship for the opportunity which was theirs, did much personal work. But they speedily developed connections with many institutions, won the confidence of Christian leaders, both Negro and white, and built up a staff of colporteurs. For this Dr. Wragg was alert to choose promising young men from the colleges and seminaries. Many of the warmest friends the Society has had were men who, having served in this way, later became leaders in their denominations.

For the period from 1901 to 1920 the headquarters of the Agency was in Atlanta, Georgia. During this period over 625,000 volumes of Scripture were distributed. In 1920, because of the spread of the Negro population over the country and more fully to meet the need, the main office was transferred to the Bible House in New York, and five subagencies were established in Cleveland, Ohio; Charlotte, N. C.; Atlanta, Ga., Memphis, Tenn., and Houston, Texas. The Memphis office was closed in 1924, but the others have continued; the Houston office being moved in 1935 to Dallas. In 1929, on Dr. Wragg's retirement, the subagencies were advanced in status to "Divisions" of the Agency, the Division Secretaries becoming directly responsible to the Society's headquarters instead of through a general Agency Secretary.

The Secretaries of the Subagencies and Divisions have represented different denominational bodies: Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Colored Methodist Episcopal, and National Baptist. The representation of the Baptist churches, which ceased with the closing of the Memphis office, has been resumed in 1941 with the appointment of the new Secretary.



*Dr. Wragg as he appeared in the days of his strength, and the tablet unveiled in his memory at the Bible House on November 2, 1939*



at Dallas. These Secretaries have been the active agents in the work of the Agency, and their names should be recorded here. Atlanta: Rev. H. W. B. Wilson, 1920-30; Rev. D. H. Stanton, 1930—; Charlotte, Rev. D. H. Sansom, Jr., 1920-32; Rev. J. S. N. Tross, 1932—; Cleveland, Rev. S. A. Lucas, 1920-31; Rev. A. J. Allen, 1931-40; Rev. V. C. Hodges, 1940—; Houston and Dallas, Rev. M. L. Vaughters, 1920-39; Rev. G. A. Hobart Sheppard, 1941—.

#### *A threefold achievement*

Three distinct and important values have resulted from the work of this Agency. The first is, of course, the distribution of the Scriptures. In the forty years the circulation has totaled 423,325 Bibles, 556,483 Testaments, and 2,755,481 Portions, or a grand total of 3,735,289. Undoubtedly, the complete figures are larger than these, as the Divisions stimulate direct but unclassified sales from the general depositories. Such a circulation is in itself an important achievement. A second value is the expression of service and leadership in fulfilment of the hope of forty years ago. The Secretaries of the Agency and their associates, all of Negro race, have revealed qualities of leadership in their communities both for the Bible cause and for Christian progress. The Negro churches, especially those of the Methodist persuasions, have shared in the development and support of the work. In the last twenty years, approximately

\$80,162 have been contributed by them to the Society. Though this has been less than one fifth of the expense of the work in that period, it is an evidence of genuine participation. And finally, though a distinctive Agency serving a particular racial group, its very work has been an expression of interracial cooperation and productive of interracial good will.

#### *Much yet to be done*

Fine as is the record of the forty years, and splendid as has been the devotion that has produced it, that same devotion, more widely shared, must make for greater achievement in the future. Population is increasing faster than circulation. The areas involved are more extensive than in 1901. The whole complexity of life for the working classes, especially those on the less fortunate margins of industrial and agricultural life, creates urgencies which must be recognized and met. The great contributions which the finest Negro Christian spirit has to make to America—contributions superbly forecast in the dignity, humility, and religious faith of their great songs—can only be made if the possession and use of the Bible saves the heart of the Negro people from the corrosive influences widespread in our present social order. God grant that the faithful, consecrated staff who engage in this task may have their talents multiplied many times over in the new decade.

### **Mrs. Jessie E. Wragg**

*Resolution prepared at the direction of the Board of Managers, January 2, 1941*

**BY** the death of Mrs. Jessie E. Wragg, on Saturday, December 28, 1940, the American Bible Society lost one of its most generous and devoted friends. Mrs. Jessie E. Wragg was the devoted and faithful helpmate of Dr. John P. Wragg during the whole of the twenty-eight years in which he was in charge of the Society's Agency among the Colored People of the United States. Not only did Dr. and Mrs. Wragg organize and begin the work among the colored people of the United States, but they also, by their sacrificial savings during this whole period, donated a trust fund of \$66,111 for establishing the William Ingraham Haven Memorial Agency among the Colored People of the United States.

Since Dr. Wragg's retirement in 1929, and since his death on June 12, 1936, Mrs. Wragg has been constantly interested in the work of the American Bible Society and in the members of the staff, whom she knew and loved. No friend of the Society has done more to encourage the officers and the staff at the Bible House and elsewhere, than she has. Everyone who knew her respected her and loved her for her unselfishness, and for

her understanding of the daily problems that the work entails. During her last illness she urged her friends not to pray that she should recover, but that the Lord's will should be done. So great was her faith, that she did not fear death, but welcomed it as a door to a greater opportunity for service. It was, indeed, a rare privilege to see the unselfish faith with which she faced her last ordeal.

The Board of Managers of the American Bible Society expresses to her adopted daughter, Mrs. Jessie Parkhurst Guzman, and to all of Dr. and Mrs. Wragg's many friends not only its sympathy at the loss they have suffered, but also its great joy for the fine life work of Dr. and Mrs. John P. Wragg, and for the most generous memorial fund which they established, and which will for all time carry on the work that they both loved so well.

Their lives and characters were a living proof of that promise of Our Lord's which says:

*"Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (St. Luke 11: 28).*



# The Bible and the American Negro

*A five-minute address given by the Society's newly appointed Secretary of the Cleveland Division, as a part of the "Wings over Jordan" program heard by thousands of people over the Columbia network in the early morning of Universal Bible Sunday, December 8, 1940*

By V. C. HODGES

**A**LTHOUGH it was not until 1619 that the ownership of Negro slaves actually began among the American colonists, the introduction of Negroes to this continent was made as early as 1526, when, in company with Vasquez de Ayllon, a Spanish explorer, they reached the Florida Peninsula, and sailed northward finally to establish the settlement of San Miguel near what is now known as Jamestown, Virginia. It is rather significant that, nine years after this event, the first printed English Bible was given to the world; for perhaps no achievement in history was destined to play so conspicuous a part in the annals of Negro life as this.

The wider distribution and use of the Bible which naturally resulted from this accomplishment so thoroughly aroused the consciousness of the Pilgrim Fathers to the intolerances and injustices done in the name of religion, that they ultimately left the shores of Europe and came to America, where they might, among other things, be granted an opportunity to exercise religious freedom.

It was among these people who boasted of living according to the Book that the black man was brought from Africa in 1619; it was in the establishment of this new civilization and culture which grounded itself upon the principles of the Book, that the black man played an important rôle; and it was the philosophy and teachings of the Book, revealed and interpreted, which stirred again the mind of a free people to the horrors and indecency of physical bondage, resulting, finally, in the abolition of slavery on these American shores.

The place of the Bible in the development and progress of the American Negro since 1863 has been manifested by its influence upon every phase of his life. His religion is fundamentally built upon it; his music, his poetry, his fiction, his drama, his paintings, are thoroughly saturated with its spirit and teachings; his educational backgrounds root in its philosophy; and even his business and politics are not wholly disassociated from his interpretations of its sayings.

He grew in churches from 700 in 1866 to 45,000



*"Wings over Jordan" celebrated its third anniversary at the Negro classic of the air, January 12, 1941*

in 1936. He grew in communicants from 600,000 in 1866 to 5,300,000 in 1936. He grew in Sunday-school pupils from 50,000 in 1866 to 2,200,000 in 1936. He grew in church property values from \$1,500,000 in 1866 to \$210,000,000 in 1936. Credit- ing the past four years with normal increases in church growth, the American Negro today can boast of approximately fifty percent of his more than twelve million people as being under the direct influence of the Bible.

Because of the Bible, he believes that "God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Because of the Bible he believes that with God "there is no respect of persons." Because of the Bible, he believes that men should love one another and "so fulfill the law of Christ." To the American Negro the Bible is truly "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

To the Bible, therefore, our attentions are all directed on this Universal Bible Sunday; and we are urged to read its pages and drink from its fountain of living waters, until "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

#### *Acknowledgment*

For the cover picture and its companion appearing on page 28 we are indebted to the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church



# Going,—Going,—Gone!

By J. S. NATHANIEL TROSS

**I**T was in the little town of Belmont, North Carolina; bands were playing and streamers floating; the auctioneer lifted his hands, and the sale of lots to Negroes began. After a good deal of sales talk and boosting of prices, there was silence, and then the words—"Going,—going,—gone!" An old man of over ninety years stood by my side, and hearing the profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity that came from a group of young people standing near us, remarked, "Des lak dat man's asayin' 'bout dem lots, so too de Lawd's acryin' ovah dis heah gin'rashun: goin',—goin',—gone! Yeah, suh, all de good tings o' yeste'day bin goin', and dey is plum gone." I, at that moment, recalled how Nebuchadnezzar, challenged by his magicians and soothsayers to tell them his dream that they might interpret it for him, voiced his inability to remember the dream in these fateful and despairing words, "The thing is gone from me" (Daniel 2: 5).

My old friend was right. The things he saw and heard in that crowd of Negroes are multiplied a thousand times in every nook and cranny of Negro life. Going,—going,—gone! Verification of the truth of this observation may be found in our homes, our schools, and even in our churches. The **THING** is gone from us. The thing that gave us hope and faith and love in yesteryears; that gave us energy to do and dare; patience to endure; tolerance to forgive. The thing that gave to our illiteracy a culture, to our service a refinement, to our simplicity a dignity, is conspicuously absent in our lives today. The thing that disciplined us for lofty duty and critical responsibilities; the thing that clothed us in our nakedness with beauty, truth, and goodness; the thing that gave us when we were hungry, the Bread of Life, and when we were thirsty, the Living Water; the thing that led us to the Shadow of the Rock in a "weary land"; the thing that was to us the Way, the Truth, the Life; indeed, "the **THING** is gone" from us. Many boys and girls, men and women, in destitution and despair, overwhelmed by crisis upon crisis, frustration upon frustration, sorrow upon sorrow, find that they have lost not only the inclination, but the ability to sing, to meditate, to pray. The thing is gone from us. And what is this deplorable, this tragic loss? It is the Word of God—the **HOLY BIBLE**. Because we have ignored the Scriptures, because of this horrid void in our lives, on every hand we find evidence of social, moral,

intellectual, and spiritual decay among our people. The checks and balances, the chart and compass of our lives, are gone. We have lost sight of the stars by which we sought our haven; our speech has lost its charm, its inspiration, its respect, its decency, its elegance, its refinement; our mien and manner, their dignity and nobility. And it is always so in the facts of experience that, when individuals, or races, or nations depart from the Scriptures, confusion follows this neglect, decay follows degeneration, and death follows stagnation. Everywhere, in every level and standard of Negro life, more and yet more Negroes are forsaking the Great Companion of our way for the veneer, the glitter, and the glamor of our day. Even Christians should understand that their Christianity is in direct proportion to their interest and study of the life and teachings of Christ as these are found in the Bible. True, the **THING** is gone from us today, but it is not irreparably lost, if we can muster the energy and the will to return to the Bible in search of the mind of Christ.

The Charlotte Division has carried on its operations on many fronts, but principally in the schools and colleges and in remote rural areas. The rise and fall of Bible interest throughout our area has been accurately appraised by careful surveys. In one of these, conducted in Lexington, North Carolina, the revelations were startling. In this town of 13,000 inhabitants, 3,000 are Negroes with about 500 families. Three discoveries might be of interest: they are typical and self-explanatory. In one family there were fourteen children. The ages ranged from two to eighteen. Twelve were in school. They lived in a three-room house. They attended no church and no Sunday school, and had never had a Bible in the home.

Case 2. A family of twelve, ten children attending school. Three-room house, a radio and a piano. No church affiliation, no Bible, no knowledge of even the Lord's Prayer.

Case 3. A family of ten, two-room house, six children of school age, two attending; no Bible; four children at home found playing Indian with guns, two lying on the floor poring over funny papers.

Here we have three families with thirty-two children, twenty-eight of school age, and twenty-four attending school. Of these not one had seen the Bible or read a line in it at any time; and yet those attend-



ing school were busy in the acquisition of mathematics, geography, history, science, literature, and other subjects of the curriculum. It is to be expected that, with no religious emphasis in the home or school or church on the lives of these children, the production of social misfits is inevitable. One is confronted with situations of this kind throughout the Charlotte area, to meet which requires time, money, and serious effort.

The first-line defense of civilization must be the Bible, and the consciousness of its power and its worth. Until Negroes discover the THING they have

lost, they are lost—and this is the Word of God—  
 Fountain of life, that feeds all living streams;  
 Light of the ages, with undimming beams;  
 Bulwark of rock, where tempests beat in vain;  
 Anchor of faith that mocks life's stormy main;  
 Bright bow of promise, spanning sullen skies;  
 Song at the tomb, that bids the dead arise;  
 Whisper of hope to lives by sorrow rent;  
 Thunder of doom to souls impenitent;  
 Guidepost that warns where simple feet would stray,  
 And points His paths; who art life, truth, and way,  
 Healer of hurts, succor of breasts that bleed,  
 Great voice of God,—thou answerest every need.



## This Is My Task

*A statement from the Secretary of the Dallas Division of the Haven Agency telling why he accepted the Society's call to service. He took up his duties on January 1, 1941*

**By G. A. HOBART SHEPPARD**

**T**HE call to the secretaryship of the Dallas Division came to me entirely unsought while busy in a very happy pastorate. After a careful study of the objectives and history of the Society, due deliberation, and much prayer for God's guidance in the whole matter (and only those who have been called to give up the pastorate and leave a people they have learned to love and serve, to go into a new and somewhat different phase of missionary service, can really understand just what is involved in such a decision), I accepted the call for the following reasons:

1. To help the Society carry out its main objective; namely, "to promote the wider circulation of the Scriptures without note or comment";
2. To help the Society achieve its major goal; namely, "to supply every American home with a copy of the Bible."

No other book is possessed with the power to transform the lives of men like the Bible. Back in Ezra's day, it was the recovered Bible that brought repentance, revival, reformation, and great joy to the Hebrew people. Wilberforce, who helped to



lift the chains of slavery from my forefathers, said: "Through all my distress and perplexities, I never read any other book, and I have never known the want of another."

Turn to any country, and you find men who read the Bible leaving names held in peculiar honor: Norway had her Nansen, that great explorer, statesman, and friend to the friendless; England, her Ruskin, the apostle of beauty in the city, the church, and the home; Russia, her Tolstoy, that pioneer of social justice; China, her Sun-Yat-Sen, that architect of democracy; America, her Abraham Lincoln, that great emancipator, and Booker T. Washington, the slave-born prophet of industrial education. These men read and loved their Bibles. They spoke in glowing tones of the wonderful, transforming power of this guidebook of the centuries.

To aid in putting the Bible into the hands of Bibleless people is one of the greatest and most needful forms of missionary service in the world. It is because of this service, based upon the evident need of the Scriptures among my people of the Southwest, that I accepted the call to the secretaryship of the Dallas Division.

3. Finally, I accepted the call of the Society because of the great scope of the work, and the wonderful opportunity it offers for service.

The work of the Society is world-wide and fundamentally interracial and interdenominational. The Dallas Division, which includes the states of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, has a

Negro population of approximately 2,348,000, or about 17 percent of the total population. In Texas alone there are approximately 4,500,000 whites, 850,000 Negroes, and nearly 700,000 Mexicans and Indians. They form a center for racial cooperation and understanding. They are in the midst of a boundless and rich country. The bounty of nature in land fertility, its oil and minerals, has endowed the people with a great gift, which may be the basis of enduring prosperity. All that is necessary is justice and freedom and mutual understanding between them. And it is my firm conviction that in this immense area "there must be no blackout of the Bible."

The Southwest is predominantly rural—a land of farms, ranches, mines, oil fields, etc. The majority of my race are tenants, day laborers, forgotten folk—a minority group, living in Bibleless homes. If justice and freedom and mutual understanding are to be forthcoming, they must have the Bible. Thousands of my people here live in vast areas where there are few or no churches, schools, libraries, or any kind of organization that appeals to the highest and noblest in man. We cannot afford to withhold the Scriptures from them, even though they live on the frontier outposts of our fair land. Thus the call of the Society, intensified by the call of Bibleless homes among my people, coupled with an opportunity to help, is why I accepted the secretaryship of the Dallas Division. And as God gives me vision and strength, I shall go forward in this great work, ever believing that "this is my task."

*(Continued from page 22)*

such a task. It was not long before I was in touch with the principal of the Booker T. Washington High School, who for many years had had an abiding interest in our work. I told him my story, and asked him if he had any students who could help do such a job. "Yes," was his reply; "I have many; but I think I can find at least a dozen among those who have had charge of distributing the Gospels among the students for the past year, who would give excellent satisfaction, and who, I think, would be happy in such work."

He did find the young people who would attempt to do the work; and one day near midsummer we were again at the high school, this time comfortably seated in the library and with us fourteen bright-eyed youngsters, as keen and bright as could be found in any high-school group. They were told what we would have them do, and they gladly accepted. After thorough instruction, a day was set to begin what we were pleased to call a "Bible survey of the colored citizens of the city of Atlanta."



*Loading up with Gospels for the day's visits*

On the day set to start, all were there promptly and apparently anxious to begin this new experience. Every house was to be visited, but in places where the family reported no Bible, the name of the head of the family and the number of the house were to be recorded. A Gospel of St. Luke was to be



left in every home, and a record made of any interesting reaction. The young visitors were to keep in mind always that they were the representatives of a great Christian institution, as well as a selected group from our leading high school of the city. After some such instruction, the last group scampered off, and the most interesting, the most revealing, and most helpful task ever undertaken by the Atlanta Division was under way.

We were to stop at 12.30 p.m. for lunch at a well-known drugstore just a few blocks from the school. When the hour for lunch came, there was much more interest in exchanging experiences than there was in eating. How they talked. It was as happy a group as I have ever seen, and as full of words as if they were just from the athletic field and their team had won. Everybody had been kind to them, and had commended them for doing that type of work. They could hardly believe it. They were thrilled, and but for an occasional smack on a hot dog or hamburger, the whole lunch hour was turned into an exchange of pleasant experiences. I was quite sure of one thing—that the survey would be completed.



*"They were as happy and full of words as I have ever seen them on the athletic field"*

Day after day they kept at it, and day after day they talked gleefully together of these ever-interesting experiences. This exchange kept the interest increasing, until the last of nearly twenty thousand homes was visited, and a complete record made. Long before the work was completed, the local newspapers, the churches, and other groups were acclaiming these fourteen high-school students the most highly commended group among the one

hundred thousand colored citizens in the city.

What a revelation to these students. They did not know the Bible was held in such high esteem by all the people; nor did they know, nor could they have believed, that the interest in them would be so wide spread because they were engaged in taking a Bible census. Their lives could never be the same after this experience. When the records were all in and examined, it was found that eleven hundred and eighty-three homes were without Bibles; and I agreed that, judging from what they had seen, many of these humble people were unable to buy one.

An interesting result of this survey was the effect it had upon those who made it. These students were a different group after they had spent a month talking about the Bible and interesting others in it. Equally pleasing was the city-wide interest it awakened in the Bible. It is, we believe, one of the things that will happen wherever such a survey is made, and that alone more than compensates for all the labor expended in making it. Every church in the city serving the Negro has profited by the survey.

This, however, is but half the story. To make this survey and discover and record the needs is to place upon those making the discovery an obligation to see that the need is met. That is the way one must feel who is in the midst of it; and that is what I heard said when the report was made to the home office after the work was done. How could so many Bibleless homes be supplied out of so limited a budget already made more limited by the expense of the survey? A fifty-cent Bible provided for each of these homes would mean the finding of nearly six hundred dollars. Impossible? no, not impossible. New York was kind enough to provide two hundreds of these, and the Secretary of the Southern District, who was deeply interested in every phase of it from the beginning, gave fifty. Eight hundred more Bibles costing four hundred dollars. How could that be found?

A day was set for a city-wide mass meeting, and an intensive campaign was launched to see how many of these people would buy or assist in buying their own Bible. The people of Atlanta were asked to help us see that every home in the city which was without this source of inspiration and help should have it. This mass meeting was honored by the presence of Secretary Betts from the home office whose presence and help brought us to the realization of our goal—every Negro home in Atlanta has in it a Bible.

One of the amazing results of this survey, and of the effort to place Bibles in every home, has been the way it has affected public sentiment in Atlanta. Ministers, educators, business and professional men all agree that not in their lifetime has the city been so Bible-minded, nor has anything of its kind been so helpful to all that is best in the life of the city.



# The Gospel Blockade Runner

*A story with a cheering footnote about international diplomacy, inter-denominational fellowship, a shot fired across the bow, an air raid, a flood, and five tons of Bibles in a Bible-thirsty land*

By CARLETON LACY

HOW many Bibles could you send into Chekiang?" I was asked as I came out of church one morning. Without hesitation, my reply was, "As many as there is any way to transport."

For weeks we had been trying to find some way of getting through the coast blockade to fill scores of orders for Scriptures in the provinces back of the lines. It seemed almost a forlorn hope.

"Could you send in as many as two or three tons?" my friend inquired. I thought he was teasing me; but I answered optimistically: "Our stocks are pretty low, and freight rates are exorbitant; but I surely would like to send in a good supply, and I think we could pack a ton or two in a couple of days."

Before the end of the week we had forty-four cases ready for shipment—something like five metric tons. They were going into Wenchow on a little trawler, the *Estelle L.* She had been bought in Japan by an American shipper to run the blockade with gasoline, and had made several trips. But the Japanese navy had caught her, and held her and her passengers for two weeks at a small island on the coast. Apparently, her release was secured on the promise that she would quit the blockade running. This trip now was different. For many weeks missionaries had been trying to get into the interior with their supplies of medicine for the hospitals, food for their fellow workers, literature for the church members, and the many other supplies it takes to keep a large number of mission stations equipped and operating. So the consular authorities had negotiated with both the Japanese navy and the Chinese Government. As a result the *Estelle L.* had been chartered as a missionary supply ship to carry no commercial cargo. We were promised safe passage through the blockade and a free landing in the port.

We were forty-one missionaries and three children on that little trawler, besides the European captain, a crew of Chinese sailors, and a few of their friends. Baptists, China Inland missionaries, Seventh-day Adventists, Brethren, Roman Catholics, Methodists, and one predestined Presbyterian, with the Bible Society Secretary, who more or less belonged to them all. Bibles and blockade running seem to be

the two points on which all denominations can and do get together. There was one passenger cabin on the boat; most of us spent the night on our 181 pieces of baggage that were piled all over the deck. The Bibles and other supplies were safely stowed below. Just at sunset we started from the shelter of the islands across the bay to the mouth of the river. In the distance we saw the repeated flashes that indicated a warship was signalling. Our captain headed for the flash, sending back his reply: "American ship *Estelle L.* Clear passage has been promised," or something to that effect. Again and again the bright lights flashed back and forth. Then there was a change in the code, meaning "Go ahead." Our little boat turned her course, and once more headed for the mouth of the river.

As we turned the corner of the island, we were met with another flashing signal. Once more the course was changed. It was dark as we chugged toward the new sentry. The flashes continued until we came right alongside a large Japanese destroyer. The captains conversed through their megaphones until we heard, "All right,—go ahead"; and we steamed off through the night. We must have been very close to the river's mouth when a long searchlight began playing over the heavens and across the water. Then, again, we saw the signal flashes. The searchlight caught us squarely in its beam, and held us there. Suddenly, there were a brilliant flash and a loud roar, and we knew that a shot had been fired, presumably across our bow. The engines stopped abruptly. Whatever naps that crowded deck had afforded were rudely terminated. The navigation light was lowered from the masthead, and I watched the quartermaster tying the anchor light to the rope. Before he had time to hoist it, another roar shook the night. There was a terrific crash. The man lying next to me on top of the water tank disappeared so instantly, that I wondered where he had gone. In the morning I learned he had landed on top of a lady, who was huddled on the deck below. Our anchor dropped with a splash and a clattering of chains. Everyone was wide-awake, trying to make out just what had happened. Apparently, nothing had hit us. We waited



rather anxiously in the glare of the searchlight, while the naval launch churned across the miles of sea that separated us. That incident ended happily, with the officer's "Sorry I didn't recognize you. Your safe passage had been arranged. Go ahead."

By then we had missed the tide, and it was the middle of the next afternoon, on a hot September day, before we landed in Wenchow. The next morning we were greeted by a genuine air raid, which forced some of our party to spend hours in a dug-out; while others of us were arranging for a small boat to carry us upriver two days to the nearest bus station. We had secured the assistance of other missionaries to land our forty-four cases of Bibles, and have them transported to several places in Chekiang, Kiangsi, Hunan, and Szechwan Provinces. In my own light hand baggage I carried all I could of the new pocket Bibles and vest-pocket New Testaments. They sold like hot cakes wherever I stopped. Especially did the students at Fukien Christian University beg for the tiny Testaments. Three of the members of the Christian association called on me in the afternoon to buy all that I had. They would have started a campaign to put a Testament into every student's pocket if I had only had enough of them to justify the effort. I held on to one for my own use, but parted with that a few days later, in Lichuan, when the township magistrate received me so cordially, and so politely intimated that he would like to have it for his pocket.

Just three weeks later, in the heart of Kiangsi, I called on a Catholic priest, who had been a member

of our party on the *Estelle L.* "Did you hear the Wenchow news?" he inquired. No, I had heard nothing since we left there, except that other members of the party had been coming along the travel routes later than we did.

"Not so good," he said, with his broad Irish brogue. "We had to wait several days for our landing permits from Chungking. The freight was all in a warehouse on the river front, when an unprecedented flood swept down the river. The waters rose swiftly, and for three days we could not get to our freight. Then we found clothing and coffee and books and sugar one hopelessly soaked mess. Our own losses," he continued, "ran into thousands of dollars."

I began to picture those five tons of Bibles after they had stood in muddy flood waters for days, and to calculate their cost. Over \$2,000 freight had been paid to get them to Wenchow. Worse yet was the thought of the many disappointments in four provinces, when waiting friends learned that once more their orders for Bibles could not be filled. There are all sorts of adventures in distributing the Scriptures these days in war-torn countries—adventures which call for a lot of Christian money and a lot of Christian grace.

\* \* \*

Since the above was written, word has been received that only a few of the cases were seriously soaked, and the missionary at Wenchow had unpacked the books and was drying them out one by one.

## Heartbeats from Brazil

By CHARLES W. TURNER

THE year 1940 has been a year of great activity in all sectors of the Brazil Agency's field. The distribution for the year has reached new levels not attained heretofore. There were distributed 17,645 Bibles, 19,052 Testaments, and 232,239 Portions, making a total of 268,936 volumes for the year. This is a very encouraging increase over the previous record of 258,669 copies in 1939.

While distribution has been carried on vigorously in all parts of Brazil, in the north of the country our work has been intensified considerably. The states of Maranhão and Ceará have been worked over very thoroughly. Rev. Benedito G. Aguiar, for instance, in the course of his travels has, whenever

possible, distributed Scriptures. Very recently, he sent to the office an interesting statement containing the personal testimonies, properly signed, of a number of persons whose lives have been deeply blessed through contact with the Word of God. Below are a few of these testimonies:

Sr. Oswaldo dos Santos Serra writes, "A friend made me a present of a Bible some time ago. I commenced to examine it, and found within it peace and joy for my soul. I realized, also, through my reading, the great responsibility that men have in the sight of their Maker, and I shall not delay to make public my profession of faith in Jesus Christ."



Sr. Aguiar writes significantly of the power of the gospel manifested in the lives of Sr. Batista Borges and his wife. After describing at some length the low level of their life previously, Sr. Aguiar goes on to say that, "Thanks to their regeneration, directly through the influence of the Scriptures, Sr. Borges is today a trusted employee of an American company in Maranhão, and their home is a model of happiness and peace."

Sergeant Raimundo José de Brito, of the Maranhão State Police, has also been profoundly influenced by reading and studying the Word of God. Sergeant Brito writes the following testimony: "It is absolutely necessary for men to know the Scriptures, in order to follow Jesus Christ and thoroughly understand the value of Christ's way of life. The Bible has taught me that humanity is corrupt, since it tends to cling exclusively to material things, forgetting that it is man's highest good to please God and not man."

Sr. Aguiar states further that "Sr. José Fernandes Botelho is another living proof of the power of the Scriptures. His life, too, has been transformed completely since he came to know the Bible."

Antonio Silva is also another who, through the reading and study of the Scriptures, has become a "new man." Today he is a faithful follower of Christ, and has led his wife also into the way. Those who knew Antonio Silva before his acceptance of Christ's gospel see in him a witness to the power of God.

During the year Mr. Glass, of Pernambuco, has also been very active in our field with his group of colporteurs. He, too, reports a splendid circulation of Scriptures, and sends in one or two notes of real interest, as follows:

"A well-known Catholic doctor came close to the colporteur's stand, and, addressing the crowd, urged them to beware of buying what were really books of Luther. 'How can you prove that?' said Adolpho, the colporteur; and as the doctor could not

reply, the colporteur went on to say—"Luther was a great reformer; but, these books were written fifteen hundred years before he was born,—and more'. As he proceeded to explain to the people the reason for the great Reformation, the doctor disappeared, leaving him to continue his talk to a largely increased and appreciative crowd.

"Soon after, a very different type of man appeared on the scene, and the colporteur wondered what was coming. He had a face like a pirate, much scarred and deformed by many desperate frays for which he had often been imprisoned. What could the man want? He came right to the front, and then bared his hairy arms, displaying the ugly scars of many other knife wounds of sinister appearance. Then he spoke aloud for all to hear. He said that, after listening often to these street talks, he had been persuaded to buy a New Testament. He had read it; and the reading had changed his life and changed his heart, and he boldly testified to the peace he had found in Jesus Christ.

"Thank God such witnesses are not unusual," adds Mr. Glass, "and I know of many brigands and murderers similarly won for Christ by the same means."

Sr. Ximenes, of Parahyba, has also had an excellent year. He writes specially of an enthusiastic storekeeper of Campina Grande, who is an evangelical and keenly interested in Scripture distribution.

It seems that, in 1926, a friend gave to this storekeeper, Sr. José B. Menezes, a Bible to read. Sr. Menezes did not attach much importance to this gift, and put the volume away in a drawer. Some little time later, however, he remembered the Bible, and felt led to take it out and read it for himself. His reading brought him a new understanding of life and its stewardship; and today Sr. Menezes is the head of his church's home missionary organization.

After his conversion, he purchased a store, and his work has been greatly blessed. Today he owns a large business in Campina Grande where his word is known to be his bond. Nor is he ashamed of the gospel the interests of which he places above everything else in his life. On the walls inside his several stores he has had important Scripture passages painted. Says he, "Since I was converted to Christ's way of life by reading the Scriptures, I believe this to be the best method for reaching the hearts of those who know Him not." Sr. Menezes always has a stock of Gospels on hand in his stores. When a customer, upon seeing a Scripture passage on the wall, inquires concerning its significance, he explains the purpose of the text, and offers the customer a copy of the Word. Great good is done each day through this means.

*Colporteurs setting out with a load of Scriptures in Alagoas, northern Brazil*







## BIBLE SOCIETY RECORD

*A Journal Dedicated to the Wider  
Distribution of the Holy Scriptures*

Editors: THE SECRETARIES

Address correspondence to Francis  
Carr Stifler, Editorial Secretary,  
Bible House, Park Avenue and  
57th Street, New York



VOL. 86 FEBRUARY 1941 No. 2

THE February issue of the *Bible Society Record* comes to you a bit late, in a somewhat new dress and without its customary wrapper. It is also mailed to you from a new address, which we hope, when normal mailing dates are resumed next month, may result in more of our subscribers receiving their copies promptly. All of these changes have been made in the interest of economy, and in the hope that a considerable sum will be released each month to meet the threatened blackout of the Bible in many lands, and to supply the Scripture needs of military men, those languishing in prison camps and hospitals abroad, and the ever-increasing number of those enlisting in our own Army, Navy, and Air Forces here at home.

Do you share your copy of the *Record* with someone else? Do your pastor and your Sunday-school superintendent receive the *Record*? It should be regular reading for every church leader, and for every one who aims to keep himself posted on the spread of the gospel in a world where needs are mounting and the calm message of God's love must be kept circulating.



E. W. G. Hudgell

South. Since this Agency is administered for both the British and Foreign and American Bible Societies by the British Society, Mr. Hudgell was an appointee of the latter Society. He served on the British and Foreign Bible Society staff for twenty-six years, the last four in charge of the Joint Agency at Cairo. The supervision of the Agency's management has been placed in the care of Mr. H. Athanasian, who has for many years been an associate in the work administered from the Cairo office, which serves Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, and Transjordan. The American Bible Society extends its sincere sympathy to the family of Mr. Hudgell in their great and untimely loss.

ONE of the Society's annuitants writes Treasurer Darlington on receipt of his birthday letter as follows:

*Dear Mr. Darlington:* Thanks for your congratulatory letter on my eighty-fourth birthday. The best investment I ever made was in an annuity in the American Bible Society. Grateful for the many blessings of a long life, for none am I more grateful than the privilege of sharing in the spread of the gospel. The Book has meant everything to me. I have carried a copy with me seventy years, and it has become so familiar that I can turn almost instantly to many of its verses of comfort, guidance, and spiritual instruction. It has the wisdom of the ages, and some of the most beautiful examples of literature known.

What would be the condition of man in our times, if the Book were put first in all countries by all their inhabitants?

JUST as we go to press comes word from Cairo, Egypt, of the death on January 14, from nephritis, of Rev. E. W. G. Hudgell, M.A., Secretary of the Bible Lands Agency.

## January Meeting of the Board

THE ninth stated meeting of the Board of Managers of the American Bible Society in its one hundred and twenty-fifth year was held at the Bible House, Park Avenue and 57th Street, New York, on Thursday, January 2, 1941, at 3:30 p.m., President John T. Manson in the chair.

Devotional exercises were conducted by Secretary Stifler.

The minutes of the eighth stated meeting of the year were approved.

The minutes of the various standing committees were presented and approved, and their recommendations adopted.

The following resolution was adopted:

**Rev. J. L. McLaughlin, D.D.**

Upon the retirement of the Reverend J. L. McLaughlin, D.D., after thirty-four years of service with the American Bible Society, the Board of Managers expresses to him and records upon its minutes their appreciation of his long and ardent service. Bringing to the newly opened work in the Philippines, in 1906, the spirit and inventiveness of a pioneer and the deep convictions of a consecrated Christian missionary, Dr. McLaughlin retained throughout his service that spirit and those convictions, and made them register both in the Philippines and in the great states of the Northwestern District. Methods that he devised in the Philippines still remain effective, and in the Northwestern District one only has to note that, during the fifteen years of his service to the District and the Chicago Bible Society, the circulation averaged 855,000 Bibles, Testaments, and Portions a year, reaching the maximum of 1,365,508 volumes in 1934. All that this meant in eager planning, in long hours, in multitudinous details, and in the spirit of prayer, those know who shared in it or in like labors.

The Board extends to Dr. and Mrs. McLaughlin its gratitude, and its wishes for many happy and less arduous years.

The death on December 28, 1940, of Mrs. Jessie E. Wragg was reported. After personal tributes had been expressed, the Board requested the Treasurer to prepare a memorial resolution to be sent to Mrs. Wragg's daughter, Mrs. Jessie Parkhurst Guzman. (See page 25.)

Congratulations were extended to Assistant Secretary Boyd, this month marking the twentieth anniversary of service in the Society, beginning with his appointment as Agency Secretary of the Arabic-Levant Agency in January 1921.

The meeting was adjourned.



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 Rev. Henry H. Ragatz, 1108—15th St., Denver, Colo.  
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*Chicago, Illinois*—35 E. Wacker Drive. . . . . Ohio, Ky., Ind., Ill., Iowa, Mo., Mich., Wis., Minn., N. Dak., S. Dak., Neb., Kan.  
*Dallas, Texas*—1914 Main St. . . . . Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Colorado, New Mexico.  
*San Francisco, California*—224 McAllister St. . . . . Wash., Ore., Calif., Nevada, Mont., Idaho, Wyo., Utah, Ariz., Alaska, Hawaii.

## Foreign Agencies

*West Indies*—José Marcial-Dorado, Ph.D.,  
 Neptuno 629, Havana, Cuba.  
*Mexico*—Sr. H. T. Marroquin, Apartado 1373,  
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*Caribbean*—Rev. Raymond R. Gregory, Bible  
 House, Cristobal, Canal Zone.  
*Peru*—John Ritchie, Apartado 448,  
 Girón Camaná 836, Lima, Peru.  
*Plata*—Rev. P. Penzotti, Calle Corrientes  
 728, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

*Brazil*—Rev. Charles W. Turner, Ph.D., Bible  
 House, Avenida Erasmo Braga No. 12,  
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*Bible Lands Agency, North*—C. S. Bell, Box  
 747, Beirut, Syria.  
*Bible Lands Agency, South*—Mr. H. Athanas-  
 sian in charge, P. O. Box 724, 62 Sharia  
 Ibrahim Pasha, Cairo, Egypt.

*Philippines*—Rev. W. H. Fonger, Box 755,  
 Bible House, No. 636 Isaac Peral, Manila.  
*Thailand (Siam)*—Rev. Robert O. Franklin,  
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*China*—Rev. Carleton Lacy, D.D., Bible House,  
 58 Hongkong Road, Shanghai.  
*Japan*—Mr. G. H. Vinall, Bible House, No. 2  
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*New Hampshire*—Edward A. Dame, 24 Warren St., Concord.  
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